

SUSTAINABLE ARLINGTON: UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meeting of April 17, 2024

UPDATES: Following Up

The ACE Program

From Talia Fox – Arlington's New ACE contract!

The Town has finalized its contract with a new supplier, Direct Energy Services (subsidiary of NRG, they were acquired), which will begin in December of 2024 and go through December 2027

The default product in the new contract will contain 100% total Class I renewable energy, per guidance from the Select Board.

This new default product will be approximately 1 cent per kilowatt-hour cheaper than the current default product (which only contains an additional 30% Class I renewables)

The ACE basic product will be approximately 2.5 cents cheaper than the current ACE basic product, even cheaper than the ranges that were presented to the Select Board

(From Pat:) Congratulations to the Town for a win all around – and thank you Talia for your hard work and thanks to all the folks from the community who showed the Select Board that the people had their backs on this.

Private Jets at Hanscom

In March, the proponent of more than a half-million square feet of new private jet hangar space at Hanscom, the largest such project in Hanscom's history, filed a draft Environmental Impact saying that this massive upgrade will actually decrease flight operations at Hanscom. On April 11, an independent study commissioned by citizen groups emphatically disagreed. It found that the project would add almost 6,000 new flights at Hanscom. New emissions could exceed 161,000 metric tons of CO₂(e) depending on how many luxury jets are added.

The independent study has been submitted to the state as part of the ongoing MEPA environmental review process. The SPJE is asking residents from all over the state to submit their comments too. The deadline is May 10. Even a short letter stating your position would be helpful. This is a NIMBY campaign of a good kind, for when it comes to climate change, the whole world is our back yard.

You can get a copy of the independent study here: [IEc Hanscom Impact Report \(04.05.24\).pdf - Google Drive](#).

You can find a copy of a tool kit for writing and submitting comments in the MEPA process here: [Hanscom DEIR Public Comment Toolkit - Google Docs](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS: A Look at Some of the Green Things Going On

From Lori Kenschaft, Energy Advocate

Electrify Arlington Fair

Thursday, May 2, 6:30-8:15 p.m.

Robbins Library Community Room

Want to make your home more climate-friendly and/or save money on energy? Drop by to learn about heat pumps, solar panels, networked geothermal systems, money-saving resources for low and moderate income households, resources for landlords (especially if you have a low-income tenant), and more. And enjoy home-baked cookies too! Questions?

Email ElectrifyArlington@town.Arlington.ma.us.

Solar Panels: What Homeowners Should Know

Arlington Community Education Course

Wednesday, May 29, 7-9 p.m.

Arlington High School

Solar panels on your roof can both help “green the grid” and reduce your electric bills. Learn all about the topic from an EnergySage solar expert and hear from Arlington residents who have installed solar panels on their own homes. We’ll talk about solar panels and inverters, different financing options, and the installation process—and cover other options if your roof isn’t good for solar panels. Bring your questions! Register here: <https://arlington.ce.elevo.com/course/4932/spring-2024/solar-panels-what-homeowners-should-know>

Want to learn about heat pumps and/or how to make a plan to electrify your home?

If you missed these recent courses offered by Arlington's Energy Advocate, Lori Kenschaft, it's not too late. Lori is planning to create and post public-facing recordings of these courses. Email her at ElectrifyArlington@town.Arlington.ma.us if you would like to be notified when these recordings are available – or if you would like to work with an Electrify Arlington volunteer heat pump coach – or if you have any questions related to heat pumps and other ways to make your home more climate-friendly.

From Trees as a Public Good Network:

Why Trees Matter for Green Development

Trees as a Public Good Network

Sunday, April 21

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Towns and cities across the Commonwealth are working BOTH to encourage green development of housing and energy and ALSO to avert the climate emergency. Learn how to make development climate friendly and “green” by preserving trees’ crucial eco-services in urban areas and in wild forests. Two scientists and three community advocates will explain how natural climate solutions can work together with the development Massachusetts needs.

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/Trees-Matter>

From ArMI

Ecofest Weedouts

Arlington MA Invasives (ArMI)
Various locations

Each year, the Town of Arlington celebrates EcoFest, a series of town-wide events honoring Earth Day. Arlington, MA Invasives (ArMI), a volunteer organization dedicated to tackling invasive species in our community, is happy to announce a series of weed-out events scheduled as part of EcoFest.

Here is a list of the **ArMI events currently scheduled for EcoFest 2024**. Download complete details from <http://tiny.cc/armi-ecofest2024>. To check our latest event calendar, visit <https://www.arlingtonarmi.org/events-1>.

ArMI Thursday Weekly Weedouts:

Join us for a standing opportunity to pull invasives from various locations in town. We will focus on garlic mustard at the Ed Burns Arena through the end of May, and then switch to other plants and other locations through October.

When: **Weekly on Thursdays,**

April 11: 1-3pm, April 18 - May 30: 10am - noon

Where: Ed Burns Arena (aka the skating rink)

Stroll & Pull: Symmes Woods: Join this invasives weedout and clean-up at Symmes Woods. Co-sponsored by Friends of Symmes Woods and ArMI. Meet at the Nora Brown parking lot mid-way up Symmes Rd.

When: **Saturday, April 20 10-12am**

Where: Symmes Woods

Scout Troop 306 Weedout at McClennen: Troop 306 will continue their annual garlic mustard pull at McClennen Park for EcoFest.

When: **Saturday, April 27 9:30 - 11:30am**

Where: McClennen Park

Crusher Lot Spring Cleanup: Join the Friends of the Crusher Lot (friendsofthecrusher.org) in pulling invasives and picking trash.

When: **Saturday, April 27 2:00 - 4:00pm**

Where: The Crusher Lot Woodland is behind the Ottoson School's back parking lot and field.

ArMI & MCPP Weedout: Learn to identify and remove Garlic Mustard, Knotweed, Asiatic Dayflower, English Ivy, and Wisteria. Plant and protect natives on the site. Co-sponsored by Arlington Invasives ArMI and Mystic Charles Pollinator Pathways.

When: **Saturday, May 18 - 10:00am - 12:00pm**

Where: Frazer St. entrance to the bike path at Old Schwamb Mill and Watermill Place

For more information about volunteering opportunities and how you can get involved, please visit <https://arlingtonarmi.org/> or contact us at armi@communication-exchange.com.

From Tufts Environmental Studies Program

Inundation District – A Film and Discussion

Tufts University Environmental Studies Program

Somerville Theater

April 21, 2024 at 6:30 pm

Join us for a special screening of Inundation District at The Somerville Theatre!

This film explores how one city ignored climate threats and spent billions building a new waterfront district—at sea level, on landfill, and in the bullseye of rising seas. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the film begins at 6:30 p.m., followed by a Q&A with director David Abel and Tufts climate scientist Prof. Andrew Kemp.

[Events | Tufts University](#)

From Building Electrification Accelerator:

Heat Pumps 101: What, Where, & How. Hosted by the Green Energy Consumers Alliance. April 18 at 12:00. [Link to register.](#)

Boston Globe Sustainability Week. Virtual, April 22-April 25 with an event on Building to Net Zero: Massachusetts Energy Codes on April 22, 12:00-12:45. [Link to register for all events.](#)

White House Summit for Sustainable and Healthy K-12 School Buildings and Grounds. April 26, 1:00-3:30. [Link to event livestream.](#)

Save the Date! Mass Save 2025-2027 Draft Plan Discussion. Hosted by MCAN and co-sponsored by MassEnergize and the MA Building Electrification Accelerator with guest speakers Mark Dyen and Hessann Farooqi. May 6, 12:00-1:00. [Link to join.](#)

From Massachusetts Green Communities Program

Opportunities to Comment on Forthcoming Draft Mass Save Plan

Massachusetts Green Communities Program

Various Times April 17 to June 3, 2024

On Monday, April 1, the Mass Save Program Administrators submitted their **draft 2025-2027 Mass Save Three-Year Plans**. The Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC), which oversees this planning process, including the development, implementation, and evaluation of utilities' energy efficiency programs, is hosting **three public listening sessions** while it reviews the draft plan. Please join one of the listed sessions to learn more and share your comments:

- **May 13, 2024: 2 - 4 pm - [Register](#)**
- **June 3, 2024, 6 - 7:30 pm - [Register](#)**

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE FUTURE OF HEAT IN THE COMMONWEALTH

[S.2105](#) (Senator Cynthia Creem) [H.3202](#) (Rep. Steven Owens and Rep. Jennifer Armini)

Priority Provisions in Future of Clean Heat (S.2105/H.3203) for Omnibus Climate Bill

Gas Transition Allies

The Commonwealth has committed to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. Buildings heated by gas contribute almost a third of emissions. Reducing those emissions is one of the Commonwealth's biggest challenges. We urge the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy to give the Future of Clean Heat ([S.2105/H.3202](#)) a favorable report, and to include its priority provisions in the 2024 Omnibus Climate bill.

No more business as usual. No path to reach by 2050 the net-zero emissions mandate can include business as usual for the gas companies. The Commonwealth must stop burning fuels to heat buildings, and use instead non-combusting, non-emitting renewable sources of thermal energy, such as air source or ground source heat pumps. Nonetheless, because of existing statutory incentives and restrictions under the Gas System Enhancement Program (GSEP), gas companies are currently spending more than \$800 million a year – an estimated \$37 billion until the end of GSEP – to replace leak-prone pipes with new gas pipes which will be obsolete by 2050.

Avoid stranded assets. Residents with financial means are already switching from gas furnaces or boilers to heat pumps. At some point, the only people left to shoulder the cost of the gas system will be low-income customers and renters who cannot afford a new heating system. The end result is that the gas infrastructure will become stranded assets. To avoid this crisis, the law needs to change to allow and incentivize gas companies to provide non-emitting renewable thermal energy to their customers, not just combusting gas.

There is a solution. Networked geothermal systems can heat and cool buildings through water pipes, drawing from the ambient temperature of the earth. Eversource and National Grid are currently piloting networked geothermal systems in Framingham and Lowell. Encouraging gas companies over time to provide non-emitting renewable thermal energy using ground source and air source heat pumps can help the Commonwealth meet its emissions reduction mandates, while reducing the necessity for costly upgrades to the electric grid.

The Future of Clean Heat ([S.2105/H.3202](#)) sets out a comprehensive and detailed strategy over the next 25 years to provide non-emitting renewable sources of thermal energy to heat and cool our buildings. The overarching purposes of Future of Clean Heat are the following:

- Empower the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to establish the regulatory structure to permit gas companies to become renewable thermal energy companies.

- Mandate that gas companies create plans to transition gas customers to non-emitting renewable networked geothermal energy using ground source heat pumps, or where not feasible, air source heat pumps.

Highlighted here are specific provisions in the Future of Clean Heat that will achieve these purposes:

(Paragraphs followed by *** address issues raised by the DPU 20-80 order issued on 12/6/2023.)

1. Require gas companies to file **detailed transition plans**, updated annually, to convert the gas distribution system to non-emitting renewable sources of thermal energy. Section 17, amending c. 164 by adding new section 145A. ***
2. Authorize gas companies to **install non-emitting renewable thermal energy** infrastructure, including networked ground source heat pumps, to support building decarbonization, using their skilled workforce and their existing grants of location in the public rights of way. Sections 4 and 5, amending c. 164, §1; and Section 9, amending c. 164, §75B. ***
3. Allow gas companies to meet their **obligation to serve** by providing customers with non-combusting renewable thermal energy (no longer limited to selling gas). Section 12, amending c. 164, §92. ***
4. Require gas companies to issue competitive requests for proposals for **non-gas pipe alternatives** to replacing or expanding the gas distribution system. Section 14, amending c. 164, § 141(b); and Section 16, amending c. 164, § 145 (d). ***
5. Require the DPU to set performance-based financial incentives for gas companies to **reduce the miles of gas infrastructure** and to increase non-emitting renewable infrastructure. Section 16, amending c. 164, § 145(h).
6. Require gas companies' GSEP plans to **increase the annual percentage of gas customers connected to non-emitting renewable thermal energy** until 100% of customers are connected, while maintaining affordability for customers and meeting emissions reduction mandates. Proposed amendment.
7. Establish a **combined rate base** of geothermal customers and gas customers to protect remaining gas customers from shouldering a disproportionate burden of energy transition. Section 14, amending c. 164, §141(c). ***
8. Require gas companies to include **plans for training and continued employment** of their workers with the same wages and benefits in their plans for installing non-combusting renewable thermal infrastructure. Section 17, adding a new section 145C to c. 164.
9. **Eliminate cost recovery and depreciation** for gas pipeline infrastructure after January 1, 2050. Section 16, amending c. 164, § 145 (c).

10. Require the DPU to develop standards for gas companies to determine **whether to repair or replace leak-prone infrastructure**, and to deny cost recovery if such standards are not followed. Section 16, adding new subsection (k) to c. 164.
11. Require gas companies, where feasible, 1) to use **advanced leak repair technology**, 2) to replace leak-prone pipe with non-emitting **renewable thermal energy infrastructure**, or 3) to **decommission gas pipes** through replacing leak-prone pipe with non-emitting renewable thermal energy by installing ground source or air source heat pumps. Section 16, amending c. 164, § 145 (a) and (c).
12. **Repeal the provision** authorizing gas companies to install gas service line extensions to new customers, found in outside Section 3 of Chapter 149 of the Acts of 2014, An Act Relative to Natural Gas Leaks. Section 18. ***
13. Strengthen and expand existing law to prohibit use of ratepayer funds for **political and promotional advertising**. Section 8, amending c. 164, § 33A. ***
14. **Restrict the use of renewable natural gas and hydrogen** to hard-to-decarbonize industrial processes. Section 13, amending c. 164, §106, and Section 14, adding new subsection (d) to c. 164, §141. ***

We know what needs to be done to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions coming from the building sector. First, stop burning fuels to heat buildings, and instead use heat pumps. Second, recognize that it is not possible to convert millions of buildings to clean heat over the next 25 years by going one building at a time. We need a comprehensive strategy to solve a complex problem. An Act Relative to the Future of Clean Heat ([S.2105/H.3202](#)) has that comprehensive strategy to drive the changes we need, giving a path forward. The time to start down that path is now, by giving a favorable committee report to the Future of Clean Heat, and by including its provisions in the Omnibus Climate bill of 2024.